



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

September 8, 2004

RE: UNITED STATES v. LAURIE L. HILL, M.D.
UNITED STATES v. UPHILL MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, P.C.

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle announced today that Dr. Laurie L. Hill, age 54, a resident of Inglewood, Ontario and formerly of Amherst, New York, along with his corporation, Uphill Medical Associates, P.C. were sentenced today in federal court by United States District Court Judge Richard J. Arcara. Hill, who had pled guilty on May 11, 2004, to one count of making a false statement relating to a health care benefit, was sentenced to a one year term of probation and ordered to make restitution in the amount of \$842.57 to a private insurance carrier, Univera Health Care (Univera), and \$5,238.35 to the federal Medicare program. The same sentence was imposed on the corporation which had pled guilty to making false claims against the United States. As part of the plea agreement, Hill surrendered his medical license in New York State and was debarred from the United States Medicare program.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorneys John E. Rogowski and Richard D. Kaufman, who handled the case, Hill, through his corporation, submitted numerous fraudulent claims to Univera and Medicare allowing him to obtain payment for diagnostic testing by falsely stating symptoms that his patients did not have. In pleading guilty in May, Hill conceded that he falsified patient charts and files by indicating they were experiencing such symptoms as shortness of breath and chest pain when in fact, Hill knew they were not experiencing such symptoms.

Between June and October of 2000, Hill submitted claim forms to Univera for medical services he provided to two undercover Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents. On the claim forms he submitted to Univera in regard to the FBI undercover agents, Hill falsely stated that one of the patients was experiencing shortness of breath and aortic valve disorder, while he claimed the other had shortness of breath and endocarditis. In fact, the defendant knew that such symptoms did not exist and created false medical records in order for him to facilitate payment from Univera.

In a related civil settlement, both Hill and Uphill, whose offices were located in both the Town of Tonawanda and the City of North Tonawanda, reimbursed Univera, Medicare, Health Now New York (Blue Cross, Blue Shield of Western New York) and Independent Health Association, over \$441,000.00 to settle other billing disputes during the years that HILL operated his medical practice. The reimbursement was partially funded by the monies frozen by the government early on in the investigation, while the balance of the reimbursement was paid by Hill himself. An additional \$51,321.25 was forfeited to the government as proceeds from Hill's illegal conduct.

The conviction and civil settlements were the culmination of an investigation conducted by the Western New York Health Care Fraud Task Force consisting of agents from the United States Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Inspector General; United States Postal Inspection Service; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division; United States Department of Defense - Criminal Investigation Service, and the New York State Insurance Fraud Bureau.

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